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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GEORG EBERS

THE STORY OF MY LIFE FROM CHILDHOOD TO MANHOOD

Volume 3.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER THE NIGHT OF REVOLUTION.

When we rose the next morning the firing was over. It was said that all was quiet, and we had the well-known proclamation, "To my dear people of Berlin." The horrors of the past night appeared, indeed, to have been the result of an unfortunate mistake. The king himself explained that the two shots by the troops, which had been taken for the signal to attack the people, were from muskets which had gone off by some unlucky accident—"thank God, without injuring any one."

He closed with the words: "Listen to the paternal voice of your king, residents of my loyal and beautiful Berlin; forget what has occurred, as I will forget it with all my heart, for the sake of the great future which, by the blessing of God, will dawn for Prussia, and, through Prussia, for Germany. Your affectionate queen and faithful mother, who is very ill, joins her heart-felt and tearful entreaties to mine."

The king also pledged his royal word that the troops would be withdrawn as soon as the Berlin people were ready for peace and removed the barricades.

So peace seemed restored, for there had been no fighting for hours, and we heard that the troops were already withdrawing.

Our departure for Dresden was out of the question—railway communication had ceased. The bells which had sounded the tocsin all night with their brazen tongues seemed, after such furious exertion, to have no strength for summoning worshippers to church. All the houses of God were closed that Sunday.

Our longing to get out of doors grew to impatience, which was destined to be satisfied, for our mother had a violent headache, and we were sent to get her usual medicine. We reached the Ring pharmacy—a little house in the Potsdam Platz occupied by the well-known writer, Max Ring—in a very few minutes. We performed our errand with the utmost care, gave the medicine to the cook on our return, and hurried off into the city.

When we had left the Mauer- and Friedrichstrasse behind, our hearts began to beat faster, and what we saw on the rest of the way through the longest street of Berlin as far as the Linden was of such a nature that the mere thought of it awakens in me to this day an ardent hope that I may never witness such sights again.

Rage, hate, and destruction had celebrated the maddest orgies on our path, and Death, with passionate vehemence, had swung his sharpest scythe. Wild savagery and merciless destruction had blended with the shrewdest deliberation and skillful knowledge in constructing the bars which the German, avoiding his own good familiar word, called barricades. An elderly gentleman who was explaining their construction, pointed out to us the ingenuity with which some of the barricades had been strengthened for defence on the one side, and left comparatively weak on the other. Every trench dug where the paving was torn up had its object, and each heap of stones its particular design.

But the ordinary spectator needed a guide to recognize this. At the first sight, his attention was claimed by the confused medley and the many heart-rending signs of the horrors practised by man on man.

Here was a pool of blood, there a bearded corpse; here a blood-stained weapon, there another blackened with powder. Like a caldron where a witch mixes all manner of strange things for a philter, each barricade consisted of every sort of rubbish, together with objects originally useful. All kinds of overturned vehicles, from an omnibus to a perambulator, from a carriage to a hand-cart, were everywhere to be found. Wardrobes, commodes, chairs, boards, laths, bookshelves, bath tubs and washtubs, iron and wooden pipes, were piled together, and the interstices filled with sacks of straw and rags, mattresses, and carriage cushions. Whence came the planks yonder, if they were not stripped from the floor of some room? Children and promenaders had sat only yesterday on those benches and, the night before that, oil lamps or gas flames had burned on those lamp-posts. The sign-boards on top had invited customers into shop or inn, and the roll of carpet beneath was perhaps to have covered some floor to-morrow. Oleander shrubs, which I was to see later in rocky vales of Greece or Algeria, had possibly been put out here only the day before into the spring sunshine. The warehouses of the capital no doubt contained everything that could be needed, no matter how or when, but Berlin seemed to me too small for all the trash that was dragged out of the houses in that March night.

Bloody and terrible pictures rose before our minds, and perhaps there was no need of Assessor Geppert's calling to us sternly, "Off home with you, boys!" to turn our feet in that direction.

So home we ran, but stopped once, for at a fountain, either in Leipzigstrasse or Potsdamstrasse, a ball from the artillery had struck in the wood-work, and around it a firm hand had written with chalk in a semicircle, "TO MY DEAR PEOPLE OF BERLIN." On the lower part of the fountain the king's proclamation to the citizens, with the same heading, was posted up.

What a criticism upon it!

The address set forth that a band of miscreants, principally foreigners, had by patent falsehood turned the affair in the Schlossplatz to the furtherance of their evil designs, and filled the heated minds of his dear and faithful people of Berlin with thoughts of vengeance for blood which was supposed to have been spilled. Thus they had become the abominable authors of actual bloodshed.

The king really believed in this "band of miscreants," and attributed the revolution, which he called a 'coup monte' (premeditated affair), to those wretches. His letters to Bunsen are proof of it.

Among those who read his address, "To my Dear People of Berlin," there were many who were wiser. There had really been no need of foreign agitators to make them take up arms.

On the morning of the 18th their rejoicing and cheering came from full hearts, but when they saw or learned that the crowd had been fired into on the Schlossplatz, their already heated blood boiled over; the people so long cheated of their rights, who had been put off when half the rest of Germany had their demands fulfilled, could bear it no longer.

I must remind myself again that I am not writing a history of the Berlin revolution. Nor would my own youthful impressions justify me in forming an independent opinion as to the motives of that remarkable and somewhat incomprehensible event; but, with the assistance of friends more intimately acquainted with the circumstances, I have of late obtained a not wholly superficial knowledge of them, which, with my own recollections, leads me to adopt the opinion of Heinrich von Sybel concerning the much discussed and still unanswered question, whether the Berlin revolution was the result of a long-prepared conspiracy or the spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm for liberty among the citizens. He says: "Both these views are equally well founded, for only the united effort of the two forces could insure a possibility of victory."

Here again the great historian has found the true solution. It was for the interest of the Poles, the French, and other revolutionary spirits, to bring about a bloody conflict in Berlin, and there were many of them in the capital that spring, among whom must have been men who knew how to build barricades and organize revolts; and it can hardly be doubted that, at the decisive moment, they tried to enhance the vengefulness and combativeness of the people by strong drink and fiery speeches, perhaps, in regard to the dregs of the populace, by money. There is weighty evidence in support of this. But it is still more certain—and, though I was but eleven years old and brought up in a loyal atmosphere, I, too, felt and experienced it—that before the 18th of March the general discontent was at the highest point. There was no controlling it.

If the chief of police, Von Minutoli, asserts that he knew beforehand the hour when the revolution was to break out, this is no special evidence of foresight; for the first threat the citizens had ventured to utter against the king was in the address drawn up at the sitting of the popular assembly in Kopenickstrasse, and couched in the following terms "If this is granted us, and granted at once, then we will guarantee a genuine peace." To finish the proposition with a statement of what would occur in the opposite case, was left to his Majesty; the assembly had simply decided that the "peaceful demonstration of the wishes of the people" should take place on the 18th, at two o'clock, several thousand citizens taking part in it. While the address was handed in, and until the reply was received, the ambassadors of the people were to remain quietly assembled in the Schlossplatz. What was to happen in case the above-mentioned demands were not granted is nowhere set down, but there is little doubt that many of those present intended to trust to the fortune of arms. The address contained an ultimatum, and Brass is right in calling it, and the meeting in which it originated, the starting point of the revolution. Whoever had considered the matter attentively might easily say, "On the 18th, at two o'clock, it will be decided either so or so." The king had come to his determination earlier than that. Sybel puts it beyond question that he had been forced to it by the situation in Europe, not by threats or the compulsion of a conflict in the streets. Nevertheless it came to a street fight, for the enemies of order were skillful enough to start a fresh conflagration with the charred beams of the house whose fire had been put out. But all their efforts would have been in vain had not the conduct of the Government, and the events of the last few days, paved the way.

Among my mother's conservative friends, and in her own mind, there was a strong belief that the fighting in Berlin had broken out in consequence of long-continued stirring of the people by foreign agitators; but I can affirm that in my later life, before I began to reflect particularly on the subject, it always seemed to me, when I recalled the time which preceded the 18th of March, as if existing circumstances must have led to the expectation of an outbreak at any moment.

It is difficult in these days to form an idea of the sharp divisions which succeeded the night of the revolution in Berlin, just as one can hardly conceive now, even in court circles, of the whole extent and enthusiastic strength of the sentiment of Prussian loyalty at that time. These opposite principles separated friends, estranged families long united in love, and made themselves felt even in the Schmidt school during the short time that we continued to go there.

Our bold excursion over the barricades was unpunished, so far as I remember. Perhaps it was not even noticed, for our mother, in spite of her violent headache, had to make preparations for the illumination of our tolerably long row of windows. Not to have lighted the house would have imperilled the window-panes. To my regret, we were not allowed to see the illumination. I have since thought it a peculiarly amusing trick of fate that the palace of the Russian embassy—the property of the autocrat Nicholas—was obliged to celebrate with a brilliant display of lights the movement for liberty in a sister country.

On Monday, the 20th, we were sent to school, but it was closed, and we took advantage of the circumstance to get into the heart of the city. The appearance of the town-hall peppered with balls I have never forgotten. Most of the barricades were cleared away; instead, there were singular inscriptions in chalk on the doors of various public buildings.

At the beginning of Leipzigstrasse, at the main entrance of the Ministry of War, we read the words,

"National Property." Elsewhere, and particularly at the palace of the Prince of Prussia, was "Property of the Citizens" or "Property of the entire Nation."

An excited throng had gathered in front of the plain and simple palace to whose high ground-floor windows troops of loyal and grateful Germans have often looked up with love and admiration to see the beloved countenance of the grey-haired imperial hero. That day we stood among the crowd and listened to the speech of a student, who addressed us from the great balcony amid a storm of applause. Whether it was the same honest fellow who besought the people to desist from their design of burning the prince's palace because the library would be imperilled, I do not know, but the answer, "Leave the poor boys their books," is authentic.

And it is also true, unhappily, that it was difficult to save from destruction the house of the man whose Hohenzollern blood asserted itself justly against the weakness of his royal brother. Through those days of terror he was what he always had been and would remain, an upright man and soldier, in the highest and noblest meaning of the words.

What we saw and heard in the palace and its courts, swarming with citizens and students, was so low and revolting that I dislike to think of it.

Some of the lifeless heroes were just being borne past on litters, greeted by the wine-flushed faces of armed students and citizens. The teachers who had overtaken us on the way recognized among them college friends who praised the delicious vintage supplied by the palace guards.

My brother and I were also fated to see Frederick William IV. ride down the Behrenstrasse and the Unter den Linden with a large black, red, and yellow band around his arm.

The burial of those who had fallen during the night of the revolution was one of the most imposing ceremonies ever witnessed in Berlin. We boys were permitted to look at it only for a short time, yet the whole impression of the procession, which we really ought not to have been allowed to see, has lingered in my memory.

It was wonderful weather, as warm as summer, and the vast escort which accompanied the two hundred coffins of the champions of freedom to their last resting-place seemed endless. We were forbidden to go on the platform in front of the Neuenkirche where they were placed, but the spectacle must have produced a strange yet deeply pathetic impression.

Pastor Sydow, who represented the Protestant clergy as the Prelate Roland did the Catholics, and the Rabbi Dr. Sachs the Jews, afterwards told me that the multitude of coffins, adorned with the rarest flowers and lavishly draped with black, presented an image of mournful splendour never to be forgotten, and I can easily believe it.

This funeral remains in my memory as an endless line of coffins and black-garbed men with banners and hats bound with crape, bearing flowers, emblems of guilds, and trade symbols. Mounted standard bearers, gentlemen in robes—the professors of the university—and students in holiday attire, mingled in the motley yet solemn train.

How many tears were shed over those coffins which contained the earthly remains of many a young life once rich in hopes and glowing with warm enthusiasm, many a quiet heart which had throbbed joyously for man's noblest possession! The interment in the Friedrichshain, where four hundred singers raised their voices, and a band of music composed of the hautboy players of many regiments poured mighty volumes of sound over the open graves of the dead, must have been alike dignified and majestic.

But the opposition between the contending parties was still too great, and the demand upon the king to salute the dead had aroused such anger in my mother's circle, that she kept aloof from these magnificent and in themselves perfectly justifiable funeral obsequies. It seemed almost unendurable that the king had constrained himself to stand on the balcony of the palace with his head bared, holding his helmet in his hand, while the procession passed.

The effect of this act upon the loyal citizens of Berlin can scarcely be described. I have seen men—even our humble Kurschner—weep during the account of it by eye-witnesses.

Whoever knew Frederick William IV. also knew that neither genuine reconciliation nor respect for the fallen champions of liberty induced him to show this outward token of respect, which was to him the deepest humiliation.

The insincerity of the sovereign's agreement with the ideas, events, and men of his day was evident in the reaction which appeared only too soon. His conviction showed itself under different forms, but remained unchanged, both in political and religious affairs.

During the interval life had assumed a new aspect. The minority had become the majority, and many a son of a strictly conservative man was forbidden to oppose the "red." Only no one needed to conceal his loyalty to the king, for at that time the democrats still shared it. A good word for the Prince of Prussia, on the contrary, inevitably led to a brawl, but we did not shrink from it, and, thank Heaven, we were among the strongest boys.

This intrusion of politics into the school-room and the whole tense life of the capital was extremely undesirable, and, if continued, could not fail to have an injurious influence upon immature lads; so my mother hastily decided that, instead of waiting until the next year, we should go to Keilhau at once.

She has often said that this was the most difficult resolve of her life, but it was also one of the best, since it removed us from the motley, confusing impressions of the city, and the petting we received at home, and transferred us to the surroundings most suitable for boys of our age.

The first of the greater divisions of my life closes with the Easter which follows the Berlin revolution of March, 1848.

Not until I attained years of maturity did I perceive that these conflicts, which, long after, I heard execrated in certain quarters as a blot upon Prussian history, rather deserved the warmest gratitude of the nation. During those beautiful spring days, no matter by what hands— among them were the noblest and purest—were sown the seeds of the dignity and freedom of public life which we now enjoy.

The words "March conquests" have been uttered by jeering lips, but I think at the present time there are few among the more far-sighted conservatives who would like to dispense with them. To me and, thank Heaven, to the majority of Germans, life deprived of them would seem unendurable. My mother afterward learned to share this opinion, though, like ourselves, in whose hearts she early implanted it, she retained to her last hour her loyalty to the king.

CHAPTER XI.

IN KEILHAU

Keilhau! How much is comprised in that one short word!

It recalls to my memory the pure happiness of the fairest period of boyhood, a throng of honoured, beloved, and merry figures, and hundreds of stirring, bright, and amusing scenes in a period of life rich in instruction and amusement, as well as the stage so lavishly endowed by Nature on which they were performed. Jean Paul has termed melancholy the blending of joy and pain, and it was doubtless a kindred feeling which filled my heart in the days before my departure, and induced me to be particularly good and obliging to every body in the house. My mother took us once more to my father's grave in the Dreifaltigkeits cemetery, where I made many good resolutions. Only the best reports should reach home from Keilhau, and I had already obtained excellent ones in Berlin.

On the evening of our departure there were numerous kisses and farewell glances at all that was left behind; but when we were seated in the car with my mother, rushing through the landscape adorned with the most luxuriant spring foliage, my heart suddenly expanded, and the pleasure of travel and delight in the many new scenes before me destroyed every other feeling.

The first vineyard I saw at Naumburg—I had long forgotten those on the Rhine—interested me deeply; the Rudelsburg at Kosen, the ruins of a real ancient castle, pleased me no less because I had never heard Franz Kugler's song:

"Beside the Saale's verdant strand
Once stood full many a castle grand,
But roofless ruins are they all;
The wind sweeps through from hall to hall;
Slow drift the clouds above,"

which refers to this charming part of the Thuringian hill country. We were soon to learn to sing it at Keilhau. Weimar was the first goal of this journey. We had heard much of our classic poets; nay, I knew Schiller's Bell and some of Goethe's poems by heart, and we had heard them mentioned with deep

reverence. Now we were to see their home, and a strange emotion took possession of me when we entered it.

Every detail of this first journey has remained stamped on my memory. I even know what we ordered for supper at the hotel where we spent the night. But my mother had a severe headache, so we saw none of the sights of Weimar except the Goethe house in the city and the other one in the park. I cannot tell what my feelings were, they are too strongly blended with later impressions. I only know that the latter especially seemed to me very small. I had imagined the "Goethe House" like the palace of the Prince of Prussia or Prince Radziwill in Wilhelmstrasse. The Grand Duke's palace, on the contrary, appeared aristocratic and stately. We looked at it very closely, because it was the birthplace of the Princess of Prussia, of whom Fraulein Lamperi had told us so much.

The next morning my mother was well again. The railroad connecting Weimar and Rudolstadt, near which Keilhau is located, was built long after, so we continued our journey in an open carriage and reached Rudolstadt about noon.

After we had rested a short time, the carriage which was to take us to Keilhau drove up.

As we were getting in, an old gentleman approached, who instantly made a strong impression upon me. In outward appearance he bore a marked resemblance to Wilhelm Grimm. I should have noticed him among hundreds; for long grey locks, parted in the middle, floated around a nobly formed head, his massive yet refined features bore the stamp of a most kindly nature, and his eyes were the mirror of a pure, childlike soul. The rare charm of their sunny sparkle, when his warm heart expanded to pleasure or his keen intellect had succeeded in solving any problem, comes back vividly to my memory as I write, and they beamed brightly enough when he perceived our companion. They were old acquaintances, for my mother had been to Keilhau several times on Martin's account. She addressed him by the name of Middendorf, and we recognized him as one of the heads of the institute, of whom we had heard many pleasant things.

He had driven to Rudolstadt with the "old bay," but he willingly accepted a seat in our carriage.

We had scarcely left the street with the hotel behind us, when he began to speak of Schiller, and pointed out the mountain which bore his name and to which in his "Walk" he had cried:

"Hail! oh my Mount, with radiant crimson peak."

Then he told us of the Lengefeld sisters, whom the poet had so often met here, and one of whom, Charlotte, afterward became his wife. All this was done in a way which had no touch of pedagogy or of anything specially prepared for children, yet every word was easily understood and interested us. Besides, his voice had a deep, musical tone, to which my ear was susceptible at an early age. He understood children of our disposition and knew what pleased them.

In Schaale, the first village through which we passed, he said, pointing to the stream which flowed into the Saale close by: "Look, boys, now we are coming into our own neighbourhood, the valley of the Schaal. It owes its name to this brook, which rises in our own meadows, and I suppose you would like to know why our village is called Keilhau?"

While speaking, he pointed up the stream and briefly described its course.

We assented.

We had passed the village of Schaale. The one before us, with the church, was called Eichfeld, and at our right was another which we could not see, Lichtstadt. In ancient times, he told us, the mountain sides and the bottom of the whole valley had been clothed with dense oak forests. Then people came who wanted to till the ground. They began to clear (lichten) these woods at Lichtstadt. This was a difficult task, and they had used axes (Keile) for the purpose. At Eichfeld they felled the oaks (Fiche), and carried the trunks to Schaale, where the bark (Schale) was stripped off to make tan for the tanners on the Saale. So the name of Lichtstadt came from the clearing of the forests, Eichfeld from the felling of the oaks, Schaale from stripping off the bark, and Keilhau from the hewing with axes.

This simple tale of ancient times had sprung from the Thuringian soil, so rich in legends, and, little as it might satisfy the etymologist, it delighted me. I believed it, and when afterward I looked down from a height into the valley and saw the Saale, my imagination clothed the bare or pineclad mountain slopes with huge oak forests, and beheld the giant forms of the ancient Thuringians felling the trees with their heavy axes.

The idea of violence which seemed to be connected with the name of Keilhau had suddenly disappeared. It had gained meaning to me, and Herr Middendorf had given us an excellent proof of a fundamental requirement of Friedrich Froebel, the founder of the institution: "The external must be spiritualized and given an inner significance."

The same talented pedagogue had said, "Our education associates instruction with the external world which surrounds the human being as child and youth"; and Middendorf carried out this precept when, at the first meeting, he questioned us about the trees and bushes by the wayside, and when we were obliged to confess our ignorance of most of them, he mentioned their names and described their peculiarities.

At last we reached the Keilhau plain, a bowl whose walls formed tolerably high mountains which surrounded it on all sides except toward Rudolstadt, where an opening permitted the Schaalbach to wind through meadows and fields. So the village lies like an egg in a nest open in one direction, like the beetle in the calyx of a flower which has lost one of its leaves. Nature has girded it on three sides with protecting walls which keep the wind from entering the valley, and to this, and the delicious, crystal-clear water which flows from the mountains into the pumps, its surprising healthfulness is doubtless due. During my residence there of four and a half years there was no epidemic disease among the boys, and on the fiftieth jubilee of the institute, in 1867, which I attended, the statement was made that during the half century of its existence only one pupil had died, and he had had heart disease when his parents sent him to the school.

We must have arrived on Sunday, for we met on the road several peasants in long blue coats, and peasant women in dark cloth cloaks with gold-embroidered borders, and little black caps from which ribbons three or four feet long hung down the wearers' backs. The cloaks descended from mother to daughter. They were very heavy, yet I afterward saw peasant women wear them to church in summer.

At last we drove into the broad village street. At the right, opposite to the first houses, lay a small pond called the village pool, on which ducks and geese floated, and whose dark surface, glittering with many hues, reflected the shepherd's hut. After we had passed some very fine farmhouses, we reached the "Plan," where bright waters plashed into a stone trough, a linden tree shaded the dancing-ground, and a pretty house was pointed out as the schoolhouse of the village children.

A short distance farther away the church rose in the background. But we had no time to look at it, for we were already driving up to the institute itself, which was at the end of the village, and consisted of two rows of houses with an open space closed at the rear by the wide front of a large building.

The bakery, a small dwelling, and the large gymnasium were at our left; on the right, the so-called Lower House, with the residences of the head-masters' families, and the school and sleeping-rooms of the smaller pupils, whom we dubbed the "Panzen," and among whom were boys only eight and nine years old.

The large house before whose central door—to which a flight of stone steps led—we stopped, was the Upper House, our future home.

Almost at the same moment we heard a loud noise inside, and an army of boys came rushing down the steps. These were the "pupils," and my heart began to throb faster.

They gathered around the Rudolstadt carriage boldly enough and stared at us. I noticed that almost all were bareheaded. Many wore their hair falling in long locks down their backs. The few who had any coverings used black velvet caps, such as in Berlin would be seen only at the theatre or in an artist's studio.

Middendorf had stepped quickly among the lads, and as they came running up to take his hand or hang on his arm we saw how they loved him.

But we had little time for observation. Barop, the head-master, was already hastening down the steps, welcoming my mother and ourselves with his deep, musical tones, in a pure Westphalian dialect.

ENTERING THE INSTITUTE.

Barop's voice sounded so sincere and cordial that it banished every thought of fear, otherwise his

appearance might have inspired boys of our age with a certain degree of timidity, for he was a broad-shouldered man of gigantic stature, who, like Middendorf, wore his grey hair parted in the middle, though it was cut somewhat shorter. A pair of dark eyes sparkled under heavy, bushy brows, which gave them the aspect of clear springs shaded by dense thickets. They now gazed kindly at us, but later we were to learn their irresistible power. I have said, and I still think, that the eyes of the artist, Peter Cornelius, are the most forceful I have ever seen, for the very genius of art gazed from them. Those of our Barop produced no weaker influence in their way, for they revealed scarcely less impressively the character of a man. To them, especially, was due the implicit obedience that every one rendered him. When they flashed with indignation the defiance of the boldest and most refractory quailed. But they could sparkle cheerily, too, and whoever met his frank, kindly gaze felt honoured and uplifted.

Earnest, thoroughly natural, able, strong, reliable, rigidly just, free from any touch of caprice, he lacked no quality demanded by his arduous profession, and hence he whom even the youngest addressed as "Barop" never failed for an instant to receive the respect which was his due, and, moreover, had from us all the voluntary gift of affection, nay, of love. He was, I repeat, every inch a man.

When very young, the conviction that the education of German boys was his real calling obtained so firm a hold upon his mind that he could not be dissuaded from giving up the study of the law, in which he had made considerable progress at Halle, and devoting himself to pedagogy.

His father, a busy lawyer, had threatened him with disinheritance if he did not relinquish his intention of accepting the by no means brilliant position of a teacher at Keilhau; but he remained loyal to his choice, though his father executed his threat and cast him off. After the old gentleman's death his brothers and sisters voluntarily restored his portion of the property, but, as he himself told me long after, the quarrel with one so dear to him saddened his life for years. For the sake of the "fidelity to one's self" which he required from others he had lost his father's love, but he had obeyed a resistless inner voice, and the genuineness of his vocation was to be brilliantly proved.

Success followed his efforts, though he assumed the management of the Keilhau Institute under the most difficult circumstances.

Beneath its roof he had found in the niece of Friedrich Froebel a beloved wife, peculiarly suited both to him and to her future position. She was as little as he was big, but what energy, what tireless activity this dainty, delicate woman possessed! To each one of us she showed a mother's sympathy, managed the whole great household down to the smallest details, and certainly neglected nothing in the care of her own sons and daughters.

A third master, the archdeacon Langethal, was one of the founders of the institution, but had left it several years before.

As I mention him with the same warmth that I speak of Middendorf and Barop, many readers will suspect that this portion of my reminiscences contains a receipt for favours, and that reverence and gratitude, nay, perhaps the fear of injuring an institution still existing, induces me to show only the lights and cover the shadows with the mantle of love.

I will not deny that a boy from eleven to fifteen years readily overlooks in those who occupy an almost paternal relation to him faults which would be immediately noted by the unclouded eyes of a critical observer; but I consider myself justified in describing what I saw in my youth exactly as it impressed itself on my memory. I have never perceived the smallest flaw or even a trait or act worthy of censure in either Barop, Middendorf, or Langethal. Finally, I may say that, after having learned in later years from abundant data willingly placed at my disposal by Johannes Barop, our teacher's son and the present master of the institute, the most minute details concerning their character and work, none of these images have sustained any material injury.

In Friedrich Froebel, the real founder of the institute, who repeatedly lived among us for months, I have learned to know from his own works and the comprehensive amount of literature devoted to him, a really talented idealist, who on the one hand cannot be absolved from an amazing contempt for or indifference to the material demands of life, and on the other possessed a certain artless selfishness which gave him courage, whenever he wished to promote objects undoubtedly pure and noble, to deal arbitrarily with other lives, even where it could hardly redound to their advantage. I shall have more to say of him later.

The source of Middendorf's greatness in the sphere where life and his own choice had placed him may even be imputed to him as a fault. He, the most enthusiastic of all Froebel's disciples, remained to his life's end a lovable child, in whom the powers of a rich poetic soul surpassed those of the thoughtful, well-trained mind. He would have been ill-adapted for any practical position, but no one

could be better suited to enter into the soul-life of young human beings, cherish and ennoble them.

A deeper insight into the lives of Barop and Langenthal taught me to prize these men more and more.

They have all rested under the sod for decades, and though their institute, to which I owe so much, has remained dear and precious, and the years I spent in the pleasant Thuringian mountain valley are numbered among the fairest in my life, I must renounce making proselytes for the Keilhau Institute, because, when I saw its present head for the last time, as a very young man, I heard from him, to my sincere regret, that, since the introduction of the law of military service, he found himself compelled to make the course of study at Rudolstadt conform to the system of teaching in a Realschule.—[School in which the arts and sciences as well as the languages are taught.—TR.]—He was forced to do so in order to give his graduates the certificate for the one year's military service.

The classics, formerly held in such high esteem beneath its roof, must now rank below the sciences and modern languages, which are regarded as most important. But love for Germany and the development of German character, which Froebel made the foundation of his method of education, are too deeply rooted there ever to be extirpated. Both are as zealously fostered in Keilhau now as in former years.

After a cordial greeting from Barop, we had desks assigned us in the schoolroom, which were supplied with piles of books, writing materials, and other necessaries. Ludo's bed stood in the same dormitory with mine. Both were hard enough, but this had not damped our gay spirits, and when we were taken to the other boys we were soon playing merrily with the rest.

The first difficulty occurred after supper, and proved to be one of the most serious I encountered during my stay in the school.

My mother had unpacked our trunks and arranged everything in order. Among the articles were some which were new to the boys, and special notice was attracted by several pairs of kid gloves and a box of pomade which belonged in our pretty leather dressing-case, a gift from my grandmother.

Dandified, or, as we should now term them, "dudish" affairs, were not allowed at Keilhau; so various witticisms were made which culminated when a pupil of about our own age from a city on the Weser called us Berlin pomade-pots. This vexed me, but a Berlin boy always has an answer ready, and mine was defiant enough. The matter might have ended here had not the same lad stroked my hair to see how Berlin pomade smelt. From a child nothing has been more unendurable than to feel a stranger's hand touch me, especially on the head, and, before I was aware of it, I had dealt my enemy a resounding slap. Of course, he instantly rushed at me, and there would have been a violent scuffle had not the older pupils interfered. If we wanted to do anything, we must wrestle. This suited my antagonist, and I, too, was not averse to the contest, for I had unusually strong arms, a well-developed chest, and had practised wrestling in the Berlin gymnasium.

The struggle began under the direction of the older pupils, and the grip on which I had relied did not fail. It consisted in clutching the antagonist just above the hips. If the latter were not greatly my superior, and I could exert my whole strength to clasp him to me, he was lost. This time the clever trick did its duty, and my adversary was speedily stretched on the ground. I turned my back on him, but he rose, panting breathlessly. "It's like a bear squeezing one." In reply to every question from the older boys who stood around us laughing, he always made the same answer, "Like a bear."

I had reason to remember this very common incident in boy life, for it gave me the nickname used by old and young till after my departure. Henceforward I was always called "the bear." Last year I had the pleasure of receiving a visit from Dr. Bareuther, a member of the Austrian Senate and a pupil of Keilhau. We had not met for forty years, and his first words were: "Look at me, Bear. Who am I?"

My brother had brought his nickname with him, and everybody called him Ludo instead of Ludwig. The pretty, bright, agile lad, who also never flinched, soon became especially popular, and my companions were also fond of me, as I learned, when, during the last years of my stay at the institute, they elected me captain of the first Bergwart—that is, commander-in-chief of the whole body of pupils.

My first fight secured my position forever. We doubtless owed our initiation on the second day into everything which was done by the pupils, both openly and secretly, to the good impression made by Martin. There was nothing wrong, and even where mischief was concerned I can term it to-day "harmless." The new boys or "foxes" were not neglected or "hazed," as in many other schools. Only every one, even the newly arrived younger teachers, was obliged to submit to the "initiation." This took place in winter, and consisted in being buried in the snow and having pockets, clothing, nay, even shirts, filled with the clean but wet mass. Yet I remember no cold caused by this rude baptism. My mother remained several days with us, and as the weather was fine she accompanied us to the

neighbouring heights—the Kirschberg, to which, after the peaceful cemetery of the institute was left behind, a zigzag path led; the Kohn, at whose foot rose the Upper House; and the Steiger, from whose base flowed the Schaalbach, and whose summit afforded a view of a great portion of the Thuringian mountains.

We older pupils afterwards had a tall tower erected there as a monument to Barop, and the prospect from its lofty summit, which is more than a thousand feet high, is magnificent.

Even before the completion of this lookout, the view was one of the most beautiful and widest far or near, and we were treated like most new-comers. During the ascent our eyes were bandaged, and when the handkerchief was removed a marvellous picture appeared before our astonished gaze. In the foreground, toward the left, rose the wooded height crowned by the stately ruins of the Blankenburg. Beyond opened the beautiful leafy bed of the Saale, proudly dominated by the Leuchtenburg. Before us there was scarcely any barrier to the vision; for behind the nearer ranges of hills one chain of the wooded Thuringian Mountains towered beyond another, and where the horizon seemed to close the grand picture, peak after peak blended with the sky and the clouds, and the light veil of mist floating about them seemed to merge all into an indivisible whole.

I have gazed from this spot into the distance at every hour of the day and season of the year. But the fairest time of all on the Steiger was at sunset, on clear autumn days, when the scene close at hand, where the threads of gossamer were floating, was steeped in golden light, the distance in such exquisite tints—from crimson to the deepest violet blue, edged with a line of light—the Saale glimmered with a silvery lustre amid its fringe of alders, and the sun flashed on the glittering panes of the Leuchtenburg.

We were now old enough to enjoy the magnificence of this prospect. My young heart swelled at the sight; and if in after years my eyes could grasp the charm of a beautiful landscape and my pen successfully describe it, I learned the art here.

It was pleasant, too, that my mother saw all this with us, though she must often have gone to rest very much wearied from her rambles. But teachers and pupils vied with each other in attentions to her. She had won all hearts. We noticed and rejoiced in it till the day came when she left us.

She was obliged to start very early in the morning, in order to reach Berlin the same evening. The other boys were not up, but Barop, Middendorf, and several other teachers had risen to take leave of her. A few more kisses, a wave of her handkerchief, and the carriage vanished in the village. Ludo and I were alone, and I vividly remember the moment when we suddenly began to weep and sob as bitterly as if it had been an eternal farewell. How often one human being becomes the sun of another's life! And it is most frequently the mother who plays this beautiful part.

Yet the anguish of parting did not last very long, and whoever had watched the boys playing ball an hour later would have heard our voices among the merriest. Afterwards we rarely had attacks of homesickness, there were so many new things in Keilhau, and even familiar objects seemed changed in form and purpose.

From the city we were in every sense transferred to the woods.

True, we had grown up in the beautiful park of the Thiergarten, but only on its edge; to live in and with Nature, "become one with her," as Middendorf said, we had not learned.

I once read in a novel by Jensen, as a well-attested fact, that during an inquiry made in a charity school in the capital a considerable number of the pupils had never seen a butterfly or a sunset. We were certainly not to be classed among such children. But our intercourse with Nature had been limited to formal visits which we were permitted to pay the august lady at stated intervals. In Keilhau she became a familiar friend, and we therefore were soon initiated into many of her secrets; for none seemed to be withheld from our Middendorf and Barop, whom duty and inclination alike prompted to sharpen our ears also for her language.

The Keilhau games and walks usually led up the mountains or into the forest, and here the older pupils acted as teachers, but not in any pedagogical way. Their own interest in whatever was worthy of note in Nature was so keen that they could not help pointing it out to their less experienced companions.

On our "picnics" from Berlin we had taken dainty mugs in order to drink from the wells; now we learned to seek and find the springs themselves, and how delicious the crystal fluid tastes from the hollow of the hand, Diogenes's drinking-cup!

Old Councillor Wellmer, in the Crede House, in Berlin, a zealous entomologist, owned a large

collection of beetles, and had carefully impaled his pets on long slender pins in neat boxes, which filled numerous glass cases. They lacked nothing but life. In Keilhau we found every variety of insect in central Germany, on the bushes and in the moss, the turf, the bark of trees, or on the flowers and blades of grass, and they were alive and allowed us to watch them. Instead of neatly written labels, living lips told us their names.

We had listened to the notes of the birds in the Thiergarten; but our mother, the tutor, the placards, our nice clothing, prohibited our following the feathered songsters into the thickets. But in Keilhau we were allowed to pursue them to their nests. The woods were open to every one, and nothing could injure our plain jackets and stout boots. Even in my second year at Keilhau I could distinguish all the notes of the numerous birds in the Thuringian forests, and, with Ludo, began the collection of eggs whose increase afforded us so much pleasure. Our teachers' love for all animate creation had made them impose bounds on the zeal of the egg-hunters, who were required always to leave one egg in the nest, and if it contained but one not to molest it. How many trees we climbed, what steep cliffs we scaled, through what crevices we squeezed to add a rare egg to our collection; nay, we even risked our limbs and necks! Life is valued so much less by the young, to whom it is brightest, and before whom it still stretches in a long vista, than by the old, for whom its charms are already beginning to fade, and who are near its end.

I shall never forget the afternoon when, supplied with ropes and poles, we went to the Owl Mountain, which originally owed its name to Middendorf, because when he came to Keilhau he noticed that its rocky slope served as a home for several pairs of horned owls. Since then their numbers had increased, and for some time larger night birds had been flying in and out of a certain crevice.

It was still the laying season, and their nests must be there. Climbing the steep precipice was no easy task, but we succeeded, and were then lowered from above into the crevice. At that time we set to work with the delight of discoverers, but now I frown when I consider that those who let first the daring Albrecht von Calm, of Brunswick, and then me into the chasm by ropes were boys of thirteen or fourteen at the utmost. Marbod, my companion's brother, was one of the strongest of our number, and we were obliged to force our way like chimney sweeps by pressing our hands and feet against the walls of the narrow rough crevice. Yet it now seems a miracle that the adventure resulted in no injury. Unfortunately, we found the young birds already hatched, and were compelled to return with our errand unperformed. But we afterward obtained such eggs, and their form is more nearly ball-shape than that seen in those of most other birds. We knew how the eggs of all the feathered guests of Germany were coloured and marked, and the chest of drawers containing our collection stood for years in my mother's attic. When I inquired about it a few years ago, it could not be found, and Ludo, who had helped in gathering it, lamented its loss with me.

CHAPTER XII.

FRIEDRICH FROEBEL'S IDEAL OF EDUCATION.

Dangerous enterprises were of course forbidden, but the teachers of the institute neglected no means of training our bodies to endure every exertion and peril; for Froebel was still alive, and the ideal of education, for whose realization he had established the Keilhau school, had become to his assistants and followers strong and healthy realities. But Froebel's purpose did not require the culture of physical strength. His most marked postulates were the preservation and development of the individuality of the boys entrusted to his care, and their training in German character and German nature; for he beheld the sum of all the traits of higher, purer manhood united in those of the true German.

Love for the heart, strength for the character, seemed to him the highest gifts with which he could endow his pupils for life.

He sought to rear the boy to unity with himself, with God, with Nature, and with mankind, and the way led to trust in God through religion, trust in himself by developing the strength of mind and body, and confidence in mankind—that is, in others, by active relations with life and a loving interest in the past and present destinies of our fellow-men. This required an eye and heart open to our surroundings, sociability, and a deeper insight into history. Here Nature seems to be forgotten. But Nature comes into the category of religion, for to him religion means: To know and feel at one with ourselves, with God, and with man; to be loyal to ourselves, to God, and to Nature: and to remain in continual active, living relations with God.

The teacher must lead the pupils to men as well as to God and Nature, and direct them from action to perception and thought. For action he takes special degrees, capacity, skill, trustworthiness; for perception, consciousness, insight, clearness. Only the practical and clear-sighted man can maintain himself as a thinker, opening out as a teacher new trains of thought, and comprehending the basis of what is already acquired and the laws which govern it.

Froebel wishes to have the child regarded as a bud on the great tree of life, and therefore each pupil needs to be considered individually, developed mentally and physically, fostered and trained as a bud on the huge tree of the human race. Even as a system of instruction, education ought not to be a rigid plan, incapable of modification, it should be adapted to the individuality of the child, the period in which it is growing to maturity, and its environment. The child should be led to feel, work, and act by its own experiences in the present and in its home, not by the opinions of others or by fixed, prescribed rules. From independent, carefully directed acts and knowledge, perceptions, and thoughts, the product of this education must come forth—a man, or, as it is elsewhere stated, a thorough German. At Keilhau he is to be perfected, converted into a finished production without a flaw. If the institute has fulfilled its duty to the individual, he will be:

To his native land, a brave son in the hour of peril, in the spirit of self-sacrifice and sturdy strength.

To the family, a faithful child and a father who will secure prosperity.

To the state, an upright, honest, industrious citizen.

To the army, a clear-sighted, strong, healthy, brave soldier and leader.

To the trades, arts, and sciences, a skilled helper, an active promoter, a worker accustomed to thorough investigation, who has grown to maturity in close intercourse with Nature.

To Jesus Christ, a faithful disciple and brother; a loving, obedient child of God.

To mankind, a human being according to the image of God, and not according to that of a fashion journal.

No one is reared for the drawing-room; but where there is a drawing-room in which mental gifts are fostered and truth finds an abode, a true graduate of Keilhau will be an ornament. "No instruction in bowing and tying cravats is necessary; people learn that only too quickly," said Froebel.

The right education must be a harmonious one, and must be thoroughly in unison with the necessary phenomena and demands of human life.

Thus the Keilhau system of education must claim the whole man, his inner as well as his outer existence. Its purpose is to watch the nature of each individual boy, his peculiarities, traits, talents, above all, his character, and afford to all the necessary development and culture. It follows step by step the development of the human being, from the almost instinctive impulse to feeling, consciousness, and will. At each one of these steps each child is permitted to have only what he can bear, understand, and assimilate, while at the same time it serves as a ladder to the next higher step of development and culture. In this way Froebel, whose own notes, collected from different sources, we are here following, hopes to guard against a defective or misdirected education; for what the pupil knows and can do has sprung, as it were, from his own brain. Nothing has been learned, but developed from within. Therefore the boy who is sent into the world will understand how to use it, and possess the means for his own further development and perfection from step to step.

Every human being has a talent for some calling or vocation, and strength for its development. It is the task of the institute to cultivate the powers which are especially requisite for the future fulfilment of the calling appointed by Nature herself. Here, too, the advance must be step by step. Where talent or inclination lead, every individual will be prepared to deal with even the greatest obstacles, and must possess even the capacity to represent externally what has been perceived and thought—that is, to speak and write clearly and accurately—for in this way the intellectual power of the individual will first be made active and visible to others. We perceive that Froebel strongly antagonizes the Roman postulate that knowledge should be imparted to boys according to a thoroughly tested method and succession approved by the mature human intellect, and which seem most useful to it for later life.

The systematic method which, up to the time of Pestalozzi, prevailed in Germany, and is again embodied in our present mode of education, seemed to him objectionable. The Swiss reformer pointed out that the mother's heart had instinctively found the only correct system of instruction, and set before the pedagogue the task of watching and cultivating the child's talents with maternal love and care. He utterly rejected the old system, and Froebel stationed himself as a fellow-combatant at his side, but went still further. This stand required a high degree of courage at the time of the founding of Keilhau,

when Hegel's influence was omnipotent in educational circles, for Hegel set before the school the task of imparting culture, and forgot that it lacked the most essential conditions; for the school can give only knowledge, while true education demands a close relation between the person to be educated and the world from which the school, as Hegel conceived it, is widely sundered.

Froebel recognized that the extent of the knowledge imparted to each pupil was of less importance, and that the school could not be expected to bestow on each individual a thoroughly completed education, but an intellect so well trained that when the time came for him to enter into relations with the world and higher instructors he would have at his disposal the means to draw from both that form of culture which the school is unable to impart. He therefore turned his back abruptly on the old system, denied that the main object of education was to meet the needs of afterlife, and opposed having the interests of the child sacrificed to those of the man; for the child in his eyes is sacred, an independent blessing bestowed upon him by God, towards whom he has the one duty of restoring to those who confided it to him in a higher degree of perfection, with unfolded mind and soul, and a body and character steeled against every peril. "A child," he says, "who knows how to do right in his own childish sphere, will grow naturally into an upright manhood."

With regard to instruction, his view, briefly stated, is as follows: The boy whose special talents are carefully developed, to whom we give the power of absorbing and reproducing everything which is connected with his talent, will know how to assimilate, by his own work in the world and wider educational advantages, everything which will render him a perfect and thoroughly educated man. With half the amount of preliminary knowledge in the province of his specialty, the boy or youth dismissed by us as a harmoniously developed man, to whom we have given the methods requisite for the acquisition of all desirable branches of knowledge, will accomplish more than his intellectual twin who has been trained according to the ideas of the Romans (and, let us add, Hegel).

I think Froebel is right. If his educational principles were the common property of mankind, we might hope for a realization of Jean Paul's prediction that the world would end with a child's paradise. We enjoyed a foretaste of this paradise in Keilhau. But when I survey our modern gymnasia, I am forced to believe that if they should succeed in equipping their pupils with still greater numbers of rules for the future, the happiness of the child would be wholly sacrificed to the interests of the man, and the life of this world would close with the birth of overwise greybeards. I might well be tempted to devote still more time to the educational principles of the man who, from the depths of his full, warm heart, addressed to parents the appeal, "Come, let us live for our children," but it would lead me beyond the allotted limits.

Many of Froebel's pedagogical principles undoubtedly appear at first sight a pallid theorem, partly a matter of course, partly impracticable. During our stay in Keilhau we never heard of these claims, concerning which we pupils were the subject of experiment. Far less did we feel that we were being educated according to any fixed method. We perceived very little of any form of government. The relation between us and our teachers was so natural and affectionate that it seemed as if no other was possible.

Yet, when I compared our life at Keilhau with the principles previously mentioned, I found that Barop, Middendorf, and old Langenthal, as well as the sub-teachers Bagge, Budstedt, and Schaffner, had followed them in our education, and succeeded in applying many of those which seemed the most difficult to carry into execution. This filled me with sincere admiration, though I soon perceived that it could have been done only by men in whom Froebel had transplanted his ideal, men who were no less enthusiastic concerning their profession than he, and whose personality predestined them to solve successfully tasks which presented difficulties almost unconquerable by others.

Every boy was to be educated according to his peculiar temperament, with special regard to his disposition, talents, and character. Although there were sixty of us, this was actually done in the case of each individual.

Thus the teachers perceived that the endowments of my brother, with whom I had hitherto shared everything, required a totally different system of education from mine. While I was set to studying Greek, he was released from it and assigned to modern languages and the arts and sciences. They considered me better suited for a life of study, him qualified for some practical calling or a military career.

Even in the tasks allotted to each, and the opinions passed upon our physical and mental achievements, there never was any fixed standard. These teachers always kept in view the whole individual, and especially his character. Thereby the parents of a Keilhau pupil were far better informed in many respects than those of our gymnasiasts, who so often yield to the temptation of estimating their sons' work by the greater or less number of errors in their Latin exercises.

It afforded me genuine pleasure to look through the Keilhau reports. Each contained a description of character, with a criticism of the work accomplished, partly with reference to the pupil's capacity, partly to the demands of the school. Some are little masterpieces of psychological penetration.

Many of those who have followed these statements will ask how the German nature and German character can be developed in the boys.

It was thoroughly done in Keilhau.

But the solution of the problem required men like Langethal and Middendorf, who, even in their personal appearance models of German strength and dignity, had fought for their native land, and who were surpassed in depth and warmth of feeling by no man.

I repeat that what Froebel termed German was really the higher traits of human character; but nothing was more deeply imprinted on our souls than love for our native land. Here the young voices not only extolled the warlike deeds of the brave Prussians, but recited with equal fervor all the songs with which true patriotism has inspired German poets. Perhaps this delight in Germanism went too far in many respects; it fostered hatred and scorn of everything "foreign," and was the cause of the long hair and cap, pike and broad shirt collar worn by many a pupil. Yet their number was not very large, and Ludo, our most intimate friends, and I never joined them.

Barop himself smiled at their "Teutonism" but indulged it, and it was stimulated by some of the teachers, especially the magnificent Zeller, so full of vigour and joy in existence. I can still see the gigantic young Swiss, as he made the pines tremble with his "Odin, Odin, death to the Romans!"

One of the pupils, Count zur Lippe, whose name was Hermann, was called "Arminius," in memory of the conqueror of Varus. But these were external things.

On the other hand, how vividly, during the history lesson, Langethal, the old warrior of 1813, described the course of the conflict for liberty!

Friedrich Froebel had also pronounced esteem for manual labour to be genuinely and originally German, and therefore each pupil was assigned a place where he could wield spades and pickaxes, roll stones, sow, and reap.

These occupations were intended to strengthen the body, according to Froebel's rules, and absorbed the greater part of the hours not devoted to instruction.

Midway up the Dissauberg was the spacious wrestling-ground with the shooting-stand, and in the court-yard of the institute the gymnasium for every spare moment of the winter. There fencing was practised with fleurets (thrusting swords), not rapiers, which Barop rightly believed had less effect upon developing the agility of youthful bodies. Even when boys of twelve, Ludo and I, like most of the other pupils, had our own excellent rifles, a Christmas gift from our mother, and how quickly our keen young eyes learned to hit the bull's-eye! There was good swimming in the pond of the institute, and skating was practised there on the frozen surface of the neighbouring meadow; then we had our coasting parties at the "Upper House" and down the long slope of the Dissau, the climbing and rambling, the wrestling and jumping over the backs of comrades, the ditches, hedges, and fences, the games of prisoner's base which no Keilhau pupil will ever forget, the ball-playing and the various games of running for which there was always time, although at the end of the year we had acquired a sufficient amount of knowledge. The stiffest boy who came to Keilhau grew nimble, the biceps of the veriest weakling enlarged, the most timid nature was roused to courage. Indeed, here, if anywhere, it required courage to be cowardly.

If Froebel and Langethal had seen in the principle of comradeship the best furtherance of discipline, it was proved here; for we formed one large family, and if any act really worthy of punishment, no mere ebullition of youthful spirits, was committed by any of the pupils, Barop summoned us all, formed us into a court of justice, and we examined into the affair and fixed the penalty ourselves. For dishonourable acts, expulsion from the institute; for grave offences, confinement to the room—a punishment which pledged even us, who imposed it, to avoid all intercourse with the culprit for a certain length of time. For lighter misdemeanours the offender was confined to the house or the court-yard. If trivial matters were to be censured this Areopagus was not convened.

And we, the judges, were rigid executors of the punishment. Barop afterwards told me that he was frequently compelled to urge us to be more gentle. Old Froebel regarded these meetings as means for coming into unity with life. The same purpose was served by the form of our intercourse with one another, the pedestrian excursions, and the many incidents related by our teachers of their own lives, especially the historical instruction which was connected with the history of civilization and so arranged as to seek to make us familiar not only with the deeds of nations and bloody battles, but with

the life of the human race.

In spite of, or on account of, the court of justice I have just mentioned, there could be no informers among us, for Barop only half listened to the accuser, and often sent him harshly from the room without summoning the school-mate whom he accused. Besides, we ourselves knew how to punish the sycophant so that he took good care not to act as tale-bearer a second time.

MANNERS, AND FROEBEL'S KINDERGARTEN

The wives of the teachers had even more to do with our department than the dancing-master, especially Frau Barop and her husband's sister Frau von Born, who had settled in Keilhau on account of having her sons educated there.

The fact that the head-master's daughters and several girls, who were friends or relatives of his family, shared many of our lessons, also contributed essentially to soften the manners of the young German savages.

I mention our "manners" especially because, as I afterwards learned, they had been the subject of sharp differences of opinion between Friedrich Froebel and Langethal, and because the arguments of the former are so characteristic that I deem them worthy of record.

There could be no lack of delicacy of feeling on the part of the founder of the kindergarten system, who had said, "If you are talking with any one, and your child comes to ask you about anything which interests him, break off your conversation, no matter what may be the rank of the person who is speaking to you," and who also directed that the child should receive not only love but respect. The first postulate shows that he valued the demands of the soul far above social forms. Thus it happened that during the first years of the institute, which he then governed himself, he was reproached with paying too little attention to the outward forms, the "behaviour," the manners of the boys entrusted to his care. His characteristic answer was: "I place no value on these forms unless they depend upon and express the inner self. Where that is thoroughly trained for life and work, externals may be left to themselves, and will supplement the other." The opponent admits this, but declares that the Keilhau method, which made no account of outward form, may defer this "supplement" in a way disastrous to certain pupils. Froebel's answer is: "Certainly, a wax pear can be made much more quickly and is just as beautiful as those on the tree, which require a much longer time to ripen. But the wax pear is only to look at, can barely be touched, far less could it afford refreshment to the thirsty and the sick. It is empty—a mere nothing! The child's nature, it is said, resembles wax. Very well, we don't grudge wax fruits to any one who likes them. But nothing must be expected from them if we are ill and thirsty; and what is to become of them when temptations and trials come, and to whom do they not come? Our educational products must mature slowly, but thoroughly, to genuine human beings whose inner selves will be deficient in no respect. Let the tailor provide for the clothes."

Froebel himself was certainly very careless in the choice of his. The long cloth coat in which I always saw him was fashioned by the village tailor, and the old gentleman probably liked the garment because half a dozen children hung by the tails when he crossed the court-yard. It needed to be durable; but the well-fitting coats worn by Barop and Langethal were equally so, and both men believed that the good gardener should also care for the form of the fruit he cultivates, because, when ripe, it is more valuable if it looks well. They, too, cared nothing for wax fruits; nay, did not even consider them because they did not recognize them as fruit at all.

Froebel's conversion was delayed, but after his marriage it was all the more thorough. The choice of this intellectual and kindly natured man, who set no value on the external forms of life, was, I might say, "naturally" a very elegant woman, a native of Berlin, the widow of the Kriegsraht Hofmeister. She speedily opened Froebel's eyes to the aesthetic and artistic element in the lives of the boys entrusted to his care—the element to which Langethal, from the time of his entrance into the institution, had directed his attention.

So in Keilhau, too, woman was to pave the way to greater refinement.

This had occurred long before our entrance into the institution. Froebel did not allude to wax pears now when he saw the pupils well dressed and courteous in manner; nay, afterwards, in establishing the kindergarten, he praised and sought to utilize the comprehensive influence upon humanity of "woman," the guardian of lofty morality. Wives and mothers owe him as great a debt of gratitude as children, and should never forget the saying, "The mother's heart alone is the true source of the welfare of the child, and the salvation of humanity." The fundamental necessity of the hour is to prepare this soil for the noble human blossom, and render it fit for its mission.

To meet the need mentioned in this sentence the whole labour of the evening of his life was devoted. Amid many cares and in defiance of strong opposition he exerted his best powers for the realization of his ideal, finding courage to do so in the conviction uttered in the saying, "Only through the pure hands and full hearts of wives and mothers can the kingdom of God become a reality."

Unfortunately, I cannot enter more comprehensively here into the details of the kindergarten system—it is connected with Keilhau only in so far that both were founded by the same man. Old Froebel was often visited there by female kindergarten teachers and pedagogues who wished to learn something of this new institute. We called the former "Schakelinen"; the latter, according to a popular etymology, "Schakale." The odd name bestowed upon the female kindergarten teachers was derived, as I learned afterwards, from no beast of prey, but from a figure in Jean Paul's "Levana," endowed with beautiful gifts. Her name is Madame Jacqueline, and she was used by the author to give expression to his own opinions of female education. Froebel has adopted many suggestions of Jean Paul, but the idea of the kindergarten arose from his own unhappy childhood. He wished to make the first five years of life, which to him had been a chain of sorrows, happy and fruitful to children—especially to those who, like him, were motherless.

Sullen tempers, the rod, and the strictest, almost cruel, constraint had overshadowed his childhood, and now his effort was directed towards having the whole world of little people join joyously in his favourite cry, "Friede, Freude, Freiheit!" (Peace, Pleasure, Liberty), which corresponds with the motto of the Jahn gymnasium, "Frisch, fromm, frohlich, frei."

He also desired to utilize for public instruction the educational talents which woman undoubtedly possesses.

As in his youth, shoulder to shoulder with Pestalozzi, he had striven to rear growing boys in a motherly fashion to be worthy men, he now wished to turn to account, for the benefit of the whole wide circle of younger children, the trait of maternal solicitude which exists in every woman. Women were to be trained for teachers, and the places where children received their first instruction were to resemble nurseries as closely as possible. He also desired to see the maternal tone prevail in this instruction.

He, through whose whole life had run the echo of the Saviour's words, "Suffer little children to come unto me," understood the child's nature, and knew that its impulse to play must be used, in order to afford it suitable future nourishment for the mind and soul.

The instruction, the activity, and the movements of the child should be associated with the things which most interest him, and meanwhile it should be constantly employed in some creative occupation adapted to its intelligence.

If, for instance, butter was spoken of, by the help of suitable motions the cow was milked, the milk was poured into a pan and skimmed, the cream was churned, the butter was made into pats and finally sent to market. Then came the payment, which required little accounts. When the game was over, a different one followed, perhaps something which rendered the little hands skilful by preparing fine weaving from strips of paper; for Froebel had perceived that change brought rest.

Every kindergarten should have a small garden, to afford an opportunity to watch the development of the plants, though only one at a time—for instance, the bean. By watching the clouds in the sky he directed the childish intelligence to the rivers, seas, and circulation of moisture. In the autumn the observation of the chrysalis state of insects was connected with that of the various stages of their existence.

In this way the child can be guided in its play to a certain creative activity, rendered familiar with the life of Nature, the claims of the household, the toil of the peasants, mechanics, etc., and at the same time increase its dexterity in using its fingers and the suppleness of its body. It learns to play, to obey, and to submit to the rules of the school, and is protected from the contradictory orders of unreasonable mothers and nurses.

Women and girls, too, were benefitted by the kindergarten.

Mothers, whose time, inclination, or talents, forbade them to devote sufficient time to the child, were relieved by the kindergarten. Girls learned, as if in a preparatory school of future wife and motherhood, how to give the little one what it needed, and, as Froebel expresses it, to become the mediators between Nature and mind.

Yet even this enterprise, the outcome of pure love for the most innocent and harmless creatures, was prohibited and persecuted as perilous to the state under Frederick William IV, during the period of the reaction which followed the insurrection of 1848.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Hollow of the hand, Diogenes's drinking-cup
Life is valued so much less by the young
Required courage to be cowardly

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE STORY OF MY LIFE — VOLUME 03 ***

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